

CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 29 th November 2018
Report Subject	Webcasting Provision
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager
Type of Report	Webcasting Provision

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 21st April 2015 Cabinet considered a report on the webcasting of Member meetings following a recommendation from the Constitution Committee. Cabinet resolved to introduce the webcasting of meeting which were of greatest public interest which were Planning Committee and County Council.

Following a procurement exercise a contract was entered into with Public-i. That contact is due to come to an end and it is recommended that a new contract should be entered into.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members support the continuation of Webcasting provision, with a contract length to be decided if approved.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO WEBCASTING
1.01	In February 2013 all Welsh Councils were awarded grant funding by Welsh Government (WG) to introduce the broadcasting of Council meetings. This initiative was linked to the provisions within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 to strengthen local democracy, the intention being for local Councils to reach out to, and engage with, all sectors of the community they serve.
1.02	Following a number of reports submitted to Constitution Committee, and a recommendation to Cabinet, it was resolved in April 2015 that webcasting would be introduced at Flintshire for those meetings which were deemed to be of greatest public interest, which was Planning Committee and County Council.
1.03	A procurement exercise commenced and a contract was awarded to Public-i towards the end of 2015. That contract is coming to an end and if supported by Members a new procurement exercise will be undertaken.
1.04	<p>In 2014 WG published the “Devolution, Democracy and Delivery White Paper – Reforming Local Government” which stated an intention to make broadcasting mandatory:</p> <p><i>“We have improved access to Council business and provided funding to help Authorities introduce live broadcasting of full meetings of principal Councils and Committees, and we intend to introduce a mandatory requirement on all Authorities to do so”.</i></p>
1.05	The intention in that Paper was to make broadcasting a mandatory requirement for the ‘new’ local authorities created as a result of the local government merger proposals in 2020. When those plans changed it became unclear whether WG intended to continue with the initiative to introduce the mandatory requirement on existing local authorities and if it did, whether future funding would be ring fenced by WG.
1.06	Flintshire’s arrangement with Public-i is that all webcasts are archived indefinitely. Because of this arrangement a report was submitted to Planning Strategy Group to seek views on changing the style of Planning Committee minutes. Historically Planning Committee minutes have been very lengthy and take up a lot of officer time to complete and coupled with the loss of a Committee Officer it was deemed a prudent approach to reduce the size of the minutes and have the webcast archive as the full record of the meeting. The minutes now reflect attendance, declarations of interest, details of public speakers and the decision of each item.
1.07	All six North Wales authorities use the same webcasting system as Flintshire. It is considered that if webcasting at Flintshire was to cease, this would be seen as a retrograde step for the authority.
1.08	Viewing figures vary depending on public interest in specific items. Full

	details of the number of viewers per meeting, from November 2016 to October 2018 (2 years) is shown in Appendix 1 with the total number of views across those meetings being 7,141. That is over 40 meetings and gives an average of 178 viewers per meeting.
1.09	Members are able to link to specific agenda and webcast points which is a helpful tool in engaging with the people in their wards.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS																																																												
2.01	<p>The quote for future provision is detailed below, with prices for 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 years. Table 1 details the prices for each of those years and the discounts for each option if paid on an annual basis.</p> <p>Table 2 details the prices for each of those years and the discounts for each option if paid in a single payment.</p> <p>Table 1 - Annual Payments</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Annual Price After Discount</th> <th>Contract Length</th> <th>Total Price</th> <th>Contract</th> <th>Comparative Annual Saving</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£15,873.00</td> <td>1 year</td> <td>£15,873</td> <td></td> <td>£0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£14,444.43</td> <td>2 years</td> <td>£28,888.86</td> <td></td> <td>£1,428.57</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£13,174.59</td> <td>3 years</td> <td>£39,523.77</td> <td></td> <td>£2,698.41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£12,857.13</td> <td>4 years</td> <td>£51,428.52</td> <td></td> <td>£3,015.87</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£12,698.40</td> <td>5 years</td> <td>£63,492.00</td> <td></td> <td>£3,174.60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 2 – Single Payment</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Annual Price After Discount</th> <th>Contract Length</th> <th>Total Price</th> <th>Contract</th> <th>Comparative Annual Saving</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>£15,873.00</td> <td>1 year</td> <td>£15,873.00</td> <td></td> <td>£0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£14,285.70</td> <td>2 years</td> <td>£28,571.40</td> <td></td> <td>£1,587.30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£12,698.40</td> <td>3 years</td> <td>£38,095.20</td> <td></td> <td>£3,174.60</td> </tr> <tr> <td>£11,904.75</td> <td>4 years</td> <td>£47,619.00</td> <td></td> <td>£3,968.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*£11,111.10</td> <td>5 years</td> <td>£55,555.50</td> <td></td> <td>£4,761.90</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The longer a contract is taken out over the annual savings increase. The most cost effective option is show in table 2, with an annual price of £11,111.10 which would be a contract for 5 years and an annual saving of £4,761.90.</p> <p>All costs include the continued lease of the equipment, 60 hours of hosted content and any ongoing maintenance.</p>	Annual Price After Discount	Contract Length	Total Price	Contract	Comparative Annual Saving	£15,873.00	1 year	£15,873		£0.00	£14,444.43	2 years	£28,888.86		£1,428.57	£13,174.59	3 years	£39,523.77		£2,698.41	£12,857.13	4 years	£51,428.52		£3,015.87	£12,698.40	5 years	£63,492.00		£3,174.60	Annual Price After Discount	Contract Length	Total Price	Contract	Comparative Annual Saving	£15,873.00	1 year	£15,873.00		£0.00	£14,285.70	2 years	£28,571.40		£1,587.30	£12,698.40	3 years	£38,095.20		£3,174.60	£11,904.75	4 years	£47,619.00		£3,968.25	*£11,111.10	5 years	£55,555.50		£4,761.90
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2.02	The most cost effective way to procure is to pay upfront for 5 years. If this was the preferred option the contract amount would be accounted for over the life of the contract with the costs split and 1/5 th allocated to each year.																																																												

2.03	From March 2017 the Council was required to publish agendas and minutes in Welsh in line with the Welsh Language Standards. The initial estimate of costs was higher than required. There is therefore an underspend of £18,000 in the budget.
2.04	If Members were in support of continuing webcasting this underspend from the translation budget could be utilised to fund the cost of the service. This would include the indefinite archive of our webcast meetings.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	With the Cabinet Member.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	If webcasting did not continue there would could be a requirement for Planning Committee minutes to revert back to the previous lengthy style. This would have an impact on staffing arrangements based on capacity issues.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Webcast viewing figures.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Cabinet report: 21.04.15. Constitution Committee reports: 15.04.15; 28.01.15; and 15.10.14. Contact Officer: Nicola Gittins – Team Leader, Committee Services Telephone: 01352 702345 E-mail: nicola.gittins@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Webcasting: live streaming of video and audio to many simultaneous viewers.